

## Appendix H. History of Management.

The following is a summary of management actions for plans amended through the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Coral, Coral Reefs and Live/Hardbottom Habitats of the South Atlantic Region (Coral FMP)). Other summaries of South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (South Atlantic Council) actions and history of management for other Fishery Management Plans are available online at [www.safmc.net](http://www.safmc.net).

### **The Fishery Management Plan for Coral, Coral Reefs, and Live/Hardbottom Habitat of the South Atlantic Region**

Management of coral resources was originally established with the joint Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) and South Atlantic Council Coral FMP (GMFMC & SAFMC 1982). The Coral FMP's intent was to optimize the benefits generated from the coral resource while conserving the coral and coral reefs. Specific management objectives addressed through the FMP were to: (1) develop scientific information necessary to determine feasibility and advisability of harvest of coral; (2) minimize, as appropriate, adverse human impacts on coral and coral reefs; (3) provide, where appropriate, special management for Coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (CHAPCs); (4) increase public awareness of the importance and sensitivity of coral and coral reefs; and (5) provide a coordinated management regime for the conservation of coral and coral reefs.

The Coral FMP implemented the following management measures for coral and coral reefs: (1) disallowed any level of foreign fishing and established the domestic annual harvest to equal the optimum yield (OY); (2) prohibited the taking of stony corals and sea fans or the destruction of these corals and coral reefs anywhere in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Gulf and South Atlantic Councils' area of jurisdiction; (3) established that stony corals and sea fans taken incidentally in other fisheries must be returned to the water in the general area of capture as soon as possible (with the exception of the groundfish, scallop, or other similar fisheries where the entire unsorted catch is landed, in which case stony corals and sea fans may be landed but not sold); (4) established that the Councils may notify the Secretary of Commerce of the threat of widespread or localized depletion from overharvest of one or more species of octocorals and recommend specific actions; (5) established a permit system for the use of chemicals for the taking of fish or other organisms that inhabit coral reefs; (6) established a permit system for taking prohibited corals for scientific and educational purposes; and (7) identified Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC) and established time and area restrictions in HAPCs.

**Amendment 1** (GMFMC & SAFMC 1990) implemented the following regulations: (1) included octocorals in the management unit as a controlled species; (2) implemented a combined octocoral quota for the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic EEZ of 50,000 individual colonies; (3) stated the OY for coral reefs, stony corals, and sea fans to be zero; (4) included a definition of overfishing; (5) established a permit system to take octocorals; (6) provided reporting requirements for those taking corals under federal permit; (7) included a section on vessel safety considerations; and (8) revised the section on habitat.

**Amendment 2** (GMFMC & SAFMC 1994) included the following regulations: (1) defined live rock and added it to the Coral FMP management unit (live rock is defined as living marine organisms or an assemblage thereof attached to a hard substrate including dead coral or rock); (2) redefined allowable octocorals to mean erect, non-encrusting species of the subclass Octocorallia, except the prohibited sea fans, including only the substrate covered by and within one inch of the holdfast; (3) revised management measures to address bycatch of octocorals; (4) provided for different management in the jurisdictional areas of the two Councils by promulgating a separate set of management measures and regulations for the South Atlantic; (5) prohibited all wild live rock harvest north of Dade County, Florida, and prohibited chipping throughout the jurisdiction of the South Atlantic Council; (6) capped harvest of wild live rock to 485,000 pounds annually until January 1, 1996, when all wild live rock harvest was prohibited; (7) allowed and facilitated aquaculture of live rock in the EEZ and required live rock harvest federal permits; and (8) required a federal permit for harvest and possession of prohibited corals and prohibited live rock from the EEZ for scientific, educational, and restoration purposes.

**Amendment 3** (SAFMC 1995) implemented the following: (1) established a live rock aquaculture permit system for the South Atlantic EEZ; (2) prohibited octocoral harvest north of Cape Canaveral to prevent expansion of the fishery to areas where octocorals constitute a more significant portion of the live/hardbottom habitat; and (3) prohibited anchoring of all fishing vessels in the Oculina Bank HAPC.

**Amendment 4/EIS** to the South Atlantic Coral FMP, included in the Comprehensive Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Amendment (SAFMC 1998), expanded the Oculina Bank HAPC to an area bounded to the west by 80°W., to the north by 28°30'N., to the south by 27°30'N., and to the east by the 100 fathom (600 feet) depth contour. Amendment 4 expanded the Oculina Bank HAPC to include the area closed to rock shrimp harvest. The expanded Oculina Bank HAPC is 60 nautical miles long by about 5 nautical miles wide although the width tracks the 100 fathom (600 foot) depth contour rather than a longitude line. Within the expanded Oculina Bank HAPC area, no person may:

1. Use a bottom longline, bottom trawl, dredge, pot, or trap.
2. If aboard a fishing vessel, anchor, use an anchor and chain, or use a grapple and chain.
3. Fish for rock shrimp or possess rock shrimp in or from the area on board a fishing vessel.

**Amendment 5** to the Coral FMP, included in the Comprehensive Sustainable Fisheries Act Amendment (SAFMC 1998c), extended the OY definition to include harvest allowances under live rock aquaculture permits.

**Amendment 6** to the Coral FMP, included in the Comprehensive Ecosystem-Based Amendment 1 (CE-BA 1; SAFMC 2009), established deepwater Coral HAPCs (CHAPCs) and prohibited the use of bottom tending gear in these areas, created a “Shrimp Fishery Access Area” within the Stetson-Miami Terrace CHAPC and created “Allowable Golden Crab Fishing Areas” within the Stetson-Miami Terrace and Pourtalés Terrace CHAPCs. The CE-BA 1 also provided spatial information on designated essential fish habitat (EFH) in the SAFMC Habitat Plan (SAFMC 1998).

**Amendment 7** to the Coral FMP, included in the CE-BA 2 (SAFMC 2011), implemented the following management measures: redefined the management unit for octocorals in the South

Atlantic to include the EEZ waters off North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia; specified an annual catch limit of 0 for octocorals under management in the South Atlantic; limited the harvest and possession of snapper grouper and coastal migratory pelagic species in Special Management Zones off South Carolina to the recreational bag limit; revised sea turtle release gear requirements for the snapper grouper fishery; and amended the Snapper Grouper, Coral and *Sargassum* FMPs to designate EFH and EFH-HAPCs.